

## Congressman Bright Praises USDA Disaster Designation for Second Congressional District Farmers

MONTGOMERY, AL &ndash; Congressman Bright made the following comment regarding the Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's disaster designation for Alabama farmers.

&ldquo;I am pleased that the USDA acted quickly in its decision to grant assistance to all counties in the Second Congressional District as well as 66 of the 67 counties in the State of Alabama. This disaster designation will make available revenue assistance programs to help our local farmers recover from substantial crop loss. While the payments through the USDA's Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program will take several months to get out the door, this is a good step in the process of helping our farmers recover from a tough harvest season. I will continue to work to ensure that Second District farmers receive any available federal assistance.&rdquo;

Congressman Bright sent a letter to Vilsack in support of Governor Riley's request for disaster declaration

The USDA released the following regarding the disaster designation:

USDA Designates 66 Counties in Alabama as Primary Natural Disaster Areas

WASHINGTON, Dec. 24, 2009 &ndash; The U.S. Department of Agriculture has designated 66 counties in Alabama as primary natural disaster areas due to excessive rain, flooding and flash flooding that occurred during the period of Jan. 1, 2009, and continuing.

The designation covers every county in the state with the exception of Coosa County; however, Coosa County also will be eligible for natural disaster assistance since it is named as a contiguous county for this disaster.

“President Obama and I understand these conditions caused severe damage to the area and serious harm to farms in Alabama and we want to help,” said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. “This action will provide help to hundreds of farmers who suffered significant production losses to a wide variety of crops, including field crops, pasture, forage, vegetables, fruit and nuts.”

Farm operators in the counties listed below in the adjacent states of Florida, Georgia, Mississippi and Tennessee also qualify for natural disaster assistance because their counties are contiguous.

Florida:

Escambia Holmes Jackson  
Okaloosa Santa  
Rosa Walton

Georgia:

Carroll Clay Floyd  
Heard Quitman Troup

Chattahoochee Dade Haralson Muscogee  
Seminole Walker

Chattooga Early Harris  
Polk Stewart

Mississippi:

Clarke Greene Jackson Lauderdale  
Monroe  
Tishomingo

George Itawamba Kemper Lowndes Noxubee  
Wayne

Tennessee:

Franklin Hardin Lincoln Wayne

Giles Lawrence Marion

All counties listed above were designated natural disaster areas Dec. 23, 2009, making all qualified farm operators in the designated areas eligible for low interest emergency (EM) loans from USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA), provided eligibility requirements are met. Farmers in eligible counties have eight months from the date of the declaration to apply for loans to help cover part of their actual losses. FSA will consider each loan application on its own merits, taking into account the extent of losses, security available and repayment ability. FSA has a variety of programs, in addition to the EM loan program, to help eligible farmers recover from adversity.

USDA also has made other programs available to assist farmers and ranchers, including the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), which was approved as part of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008; the Emergency Conservation Program; Federal Crop Insurance; and the Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program. Interested farmers may contact their local USDA Service Centers for further information on eligibility requirements and application procedures for these and other programs. Additional information is also available online at <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>.